

RECREATION AND TOURISM REVIEW COMMITTEE

13th November, 2013

Present: Mr AE Sangster (Chairman)
Councillors P Harries, L Jenkins and R Owens, and Mrs M Thomas

(NPA Offices, Llanion Park, Pembroke Dock: 10:00am – 12:20pm)

1. Apology

An apology for absence was received from Cllr O James.

2. Disclosures of interest

No disclosures of interest were received.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on the 26th June and 17th July 2013 were presented for confirmation and signature.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings held on the 26th July 2013 and the 17th July 2013 be confirmed and signed.

4. Performance report for the period ending September 2013

The Business and Performance Manager presented progress on the outcomes of the Authority's Corporate Strategy that were relevant to the work of the Committee using the Ffynnon performance management system. This showed the percentage of work completed, together with the associated RAG (Red-Amber-Green) status, for each action. Progress on each action was set out in the report.

It was reported that the majority of actions and measures were proceeding in line with expectations. Looking first at those measures relating to the work of the Delivery Team, practical management work was on schedule as most maintenance and repair work took place during the winter months when the growing season had ended. With regard to the action seeking to increase the numbers of volunteers, progress had been limited. Officers clarified that the figures for the number of volunteers given in the related measure included groups such as those from Pembrokeshire College, The Ramblers, the Army and the Probation Service; use of these groups had increased while little progress had been made in increasing the number of voluntary wardens, etc. Members asked that a presentation on the Authority's current use of volunteers and future plans for increasing that use be given to a future meeting of the Committee.

With regard to the Centres operated by the Authority, the picture was mixed both with regard to sales and visitor numbers, for which there



seemed to be no obvious reasons. Members were unhappy with the target for average sale per visitor as this did not appear to be particularly meaningful, particularly as the purpose of the centres was not primarily to target sales, but to pass on information to visitors. They felt that there was only point in measuring a target if action could be taken as a result of such measurement. The Business and Performance Manager agreed to look again at the information provided prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

Turning to the work of the Discovery Service, it was noted that limited progress had been made with the service review due to workload pressures. Members asked what was being reviewed and why and officers explained that the review would encompass a number of areas, including a review of the Authority's Interpretation Strategy, the greater importance now being placed on social inclusion work as well as the coordination of the work of Rangers in both the Delivery and Discovery services. The results of the review would be reported to Members in due course.

It was **RESOLVED** that the performance report be received.

5. Overview of Service Performance from April 2012 – March 2013

The Director of Delivery and Discovery explained that the report had been produced at the request of Members of the Committee to give an overview of the performance of the Delivery and Discovery teams. It pulled together information contained in a range of individual performance reports so that Members had a clear overview of service delivery performance which would assist them in determining the priorities for the Recreation and Tourism Review Committee in the forthcoming year.

Members thanked the Director for a helpful overview and said that they would like the Committee to become more forward looking in helping officers identify priorities and objectives in the light of financial restrictions. In this respect, they asked officers at the next meeting to present an indication of what each team saw as its priorities in the coming year, together with some options for delivery with their advantages and disadvantages. It was also suggested that future meetings could also look at particular topics more holistically, which might involve presentations from other teams and Members were invited to suggest areas to be covered.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and that an indication of the priorities for each team in the coming year be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.



6. **Review of Public Rights of Way and Access Furniture supplied by the National Park Woodland Centre**

The Access Officer explained that as a result of the scrutiny review of the public rights of way service carried out jointly with Brecon Beacons NPA, an internal review was undertaken to see where efficiencies could be made, particularly in respect of the supply and design of access furniture (stiles, gates, signposts, etc.). This had identified savings in a number of products used on inland paths through design modifications and these were outlined in the report. It was however noted that these efficiencies could be achieved without compromising the standard of access furniture and in full compliance with the Authority's Timber Procurement Policy. Currently all furniture on the coast path was of a higher specification in order to meet the standards required of a national trail.

Thanking the Officer for a useful report and for the proposed costs savings, Members were nevertheless concerned at the impact of the new policy on the economics of the Cilrhedyn Woodland Centre, from which much of this furniture was sourced. They also asked that in considering the future of the Centre, that officers spoke with Councillor Kilmister and the Oriel y Parc Centre Manager who might be able to suggest different options. Officers replied that like all aspects of the Authority's work, the future of the centre was under review. However the level of external sales had increased in the current year and staff numbers had reduced due to the retirement of a member of staff.

It was **RESOLVED** that a recommendation be made to the National Park Authority to adopt the new design and specification of public rights of way furniture.

7. **Presentation on the Enjoy Website**

The Health and Tourism Policy Officer explained that the 'Enjoy Pembrokeshire' website had been developed by the National Park Authority some years ago, in addition to the Authority's main website, to promote some of the activities that could be enjoyed within the National Park. Officers felt that the time had come to refresh the website, and the costs and benefits of doing so were outlined for the Committee. The tender for redesign of the site had been awarded to the Web Publishing Portal and it was hoped that the site would be launched before the end of the year. The presentation went on to outline the key features of the refreshed site and provided Members with screenshots showing what it would look like; it was noted that all information on the old site would be transferred to the new site and this would be updated where appropriate in due course. The officer hoped to be able to demonstrate the new site, once it had been launched, at a future meeting of the Committee.

Members agreed that the new site looked much 'fresher' and easier to use, as well as commending the huge amount of information that could be



found on the site which would be of benefit both to visitors and to staff working in Visitor Centres around the County.

NOTED.

8. Snow on the Preseli Hills

The Health and Tourism Policy Officer explained that when thinking of snow, most people pictured an idyllic, picturesque landscape however the reality was quite different. As snow in Pembrokeshire was quite rare and also tended to be short lived, the impact of the many people who came to enjoy it was very intense. A number of them parked irresponsibly, accessed places with no public access, damaged fences, gates and walls and ignored signs. A tremendous amount of litter in the form of broken sledges and other items used for sledging was left behind. As a result many farmers also suffered disruption and abusive behaviour.

In response to these problems, officers had taken a number of steps through a 'multi-agency' approach, including piloting action on areas either side of the mountain road B4329 from New Inn to Bwlch y Gwynt, developing a 'Farmer Toolkit' and raising public awareness of the key issues. Greater detail on these and other possible actions were provided to the Committee.

Some Members were concerned that the Authority was spoiling the fun of many because of the few who were acting irresponsibly. They agreed that the way forward was raising public awareness and the use of temporary signs when it was actually snowing. They asked if a copy of the press release could be circulated to Members in advance of it being released.

NOTED.

9. Agreement of work to be monitored by the Committee over the next 12 – 18 months

A report prepared by the Director of Delivery and Discovery was circulated to the Committee inviting Members to comment upon the future role and format of the Committee and to provide any comments to the Chief Executive by 23rd January 2014.

NOTED.

10. Other business

The Chairman agreed that the following two information reports could be presented to the Committee.

11. Carew Castle Holdings Capital Project

Members were reminded that a project had been ongoing at Carew to:



- provide a new roof, doors and windows at the Lesser hall
- remove the portacabins from the Walled Garden and create a new Visitor Centre from the former workman's store
- resurface the car park
- develop an interpretation scheme for the Walled Garden.

The report provided Members with an update on the project and noted that the schemes on the Lesser Hall, Visitor Centre and Car Park had been completed on time and within budget (subject to final accounts) and that a scheme for interpretation of the Walled Garden was currently being developed and would shortly form the subject of a planning application.

NOTED.

12. Origins at Castell Henllys

Members were reminded that a project was ongoing to redevelop Castell Henllys to act as a hub for the interpretation and understanding of prehistoric Pembrokeshire and the report gave an overview of the proposed works to the site and the progress made to date. It was reported that all of the preliminary design work had now been completed and statutory applications, including planning applications, were in the process of being submitted.

The Head of Discovery explained that at present there was not sufficient money available to do all that was desired, however additional funding would continue to be sought. The project was not without risk and a risk log for the project was circulated to the Committee for information. He advised that these risks would be managed to minimise any adverse effects.

Members were excited by the potential of Castell Henllys and commended officers' enthusiasm for the project. They would observe progress with interest and hoped to be able to visit the site.

NOTED.

13. Continuous Improvement Group: delegation of issues of concern

It was **RESOLVED** that there were no issues of concern that needed to be delegated to the Continuous Improvement Group for consideration.

